

NEWS RELEASE

Office of Governor Christine Gregoire

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DASA DIRECTOR KENNETH D. STARK NAMED TO HEAD PROJECT REVAMPING STATE'S MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

OLYMPIA, Wash. – A veteran administrator who built a solid research base for Washington State's chemical dependency treatment programs has been selected by Governor Christine Gregoire to head up an innovative attempt to retool delivery of the state's mental health care system.

Kenneth D. Stark, Director of the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA) in the Department of Social and Health Services, will chair the project under funding from a federal Mental Health Transformation Grant.

Washington was one of seven states to win the grants, which will total between \$2 million and \$3 million per year for each state over the next five years. The grant will enable a comprehensive review of mental health services at every level of government and encompass all state and local programs – public health, law enforcement and corrections, employment security, education and social services – that are involved with mental health.

Governor Gregoire, who called Stark “a dynamic visionary leader,” said his record in DASA since being named director in 1988 underscored the leadership and insight he would bring to the mental health project.

“Ken has built an impressive career on the principle of identifying and implementing effective treatment strategies,” the governor said. “He has been a staunch supporter of quality improvements and evidence-based decision making – exactly what our mental health delivery system needs.”

Stark serves on the National Advisory Council of the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and on a national policy advisory panel for the National Conference of State Legislatures. He received the Governor's Sustaining Leadership Award earlier this fall – one of many honors he has received over the years.

Stark holds a Master's degree in Education from Seattle University in the field of Counseling and Guidance of Addictions, and he earned a Master's in Business Administration (MBA) from City University in Seattle.



Kenneth D. Stark

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2 – Ken Stark to head state mental health review

Announced early in October, the Washington State grant includes a year of fact-finding and coordination with mental health providers, consumers and stakeholders. The result will include an inventory of mental health resources available in the state as well as a comprehensive assessment of the state's needs. From that, the project will draw together a state plan that can be implemented in succeeding years.

The ambitious goal of the grant is to find new ways of delivering effective mental health treatment, putting patients at the center of care, and building consumer and stakeholder feedback into the process. The effort formally kicks off with a public forum and workshop with DSHS Secretary Robin Arnold-Williams in early December.

Arnold-Williams said Stark will be succeeded at DASA on an acting basis by Doug Allen, a 10-year veteran of the division.

Allen is currently Office Chief of Policy planning and Legislative Relations. He worked earlier as DASA's Special Projects Manager and spent four years as a Policy Analyst in the Office of Financial Management after beginning his state service in the Employment Security Department in the late 1970s.

Allen received a Governor's Distinguished Manager Award in 2004. He has a degree in Business Administration from Washington State University.

-30-

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